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Opening of the Legislature.

The Legislative session was opened yesterday, with the usual formalities, by his Honor Lieutenant Governor McKinnon. The speech from the throne referred to the inter-provincial conference at Ottawa, the negotiations between the Federal and Provincial Governments relative to the establishment in this Province of an experimental farm and to the consideration of the affiliation of Prince of Wales College with McGill College Montreal, as well as to the necessity of building a new jail and poor house. After his Honor with drew, Mr. Murdoch Kennedy, the new member for the first district of Queen's, was sworn in and introduced by the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Wood. He took his seat amid opposition applause. The standing committee were then appointed and the House adjourned.

The Government's False Position.

Nothing could more clearly indicate the untenable position of the Provincial Government regarding the subsidy question, nor could anything more surely tend to prejudice the Island's cause in the minds of the representatives of the other Provinces, than the attitude assumed by the Patriotic in this connection. The Government organ, conscious of the weakness of its case, plainly misrepresents the motives and the actions of the Leader of the Opposition and his friends in bringing this matter before the electorate at public meetings. This is a question of the greatest possible importance to Prince Edward Island and unless an effort is now made to correct the unfortunate position created for us by the inaction of our delegates to the Ottawa Conference, our cause is lost beyond redemption. Instead of making some effort to assist in placing our case fairly before the public, the Patriotic assumes an antagonistic attitude and accuses the Leader of the Opposition and his friends of condemning Premier Peters and Hon. Mr. Hughes because of the additional subsidy of \$70,000 for P.E. Island. If the Patriotic were honest in this contention it would publish the resolutions passed by Liberals and Conservatives combined, at these public meetings. But the Patriotic has not published one of these resolutions; it has not dared to publish them, because these resolutions would falsify its statements regarding the attitude and contentions of the Opposition Leader and his friends.

The Leader of the Opposition and his friends find no fault with the proposed increase of \$70,000 to our subsidy, and no word has been uttered by the Opposition speakers at any of the meetings against this phase of the arrangement for the increase of our subsidy. On the contrary all the Conservative speakers have referred to this feature of the new arrangement as quite fair to Prince Edward Island, as compared with the other Provinces. But while this is conceded we must not lose sight of the fact, that our delegates to the Ottawa Conference had nothing to do with securing this proposed increase. The \$70,000 increase to Prince Edward Island was arranged for at the Quebec Conference of 1887 at which our Province was not represented. The resolutions of that Conference, so far as this phase of the subsidy question is concerned have not been changed. It will, therefore, be seen that Messrs. Peters and Hughes had no more to do with securing this proposed increase than the humblest elector of this Province who has never been to Ottawa. The \$70,000 increase for Government and Legislature is an addition to the \$30,000 already received by us under that head, making \$100,000, the smallest amount allotted for this purpose to any Province. \$100,000 for Government and Legislature is set down for all Provinces with a population of not more than 150,000. According to this scale we would be entitled to the \$100,000 if we had but 40,000 population and we would get no more if we had 150,000 of a population. It will, therefore be seen that this division of the subsidy is not calculated on a per capita basis, although it bears a certain relation to population.

Exception is taken to our delegates to the Ottawa conference, not for what they did, for they did nothing and might as well have been home; but for what they did not do. This brings us to the other

division of the subsidy question, the 80 cents per head of the population. We have spoken of this before and our space will not allow us to go into it exhaustively today. On this head we receive no increase because our population has not increased; but on the contrary decreased. We were, however, to receive 80 cents per head on the highest population since Confederation; but our delegates to the Ottawa conference voted to remove this saving clause in its application to this Province, and the consequence is that we shall hereafter receive 80 cents a head, not on a population of 109,000, the highest since Confederation; but on whatever the population is from census to census. As we lost over 6,000 between 1891 and 1901, we lose at once, that many 80 cents per head; that is to say our per capita allowance has been reduced that much, nearly \$5,000. This is one of the things we blame our delegates for, why did they allow this safe-guard to be removed, while voting to retain it for the new Provinces? Does the Patriotic commend our delegates for having thus sacrificed our rights and privileges? Our population continues to decrease and our per capita of 80 cents will decrease accordingly. That is one of the things we take exception to on the part of our delegates. Is it not a proper exception to take?

Another reason for condemning our delegates is their inaction regarding our claim for increased cost of education, public works, asylums etc. since Confederation. On this head we had a legitimate claim of \$129,000; but our delegates never asked for one cent. Have we not a just right to condemn them for their utter negligence in this particular? Had they put in this claim they could not have reasonably been refused. British Columbia put in a claim for special treatment and was awarded \$100,000 extra. But the delegates from Prince Edward Island sat dumb and put in no claim and made no demand for special treatment for us, in consequence of our special position. The consequence is that we get the least amount allotted to any Province for Government and Legislature, as arranged at the conference of 1887; we lose the right to receive our per capita allowance on the maximum population, and had no one to raise a voice in behalf of our claim for increased cost of education public works etc. Do our people think this was the proper course for our delegates to pursue when the vital interests of Prince Edward Island were intrusted to them?

All the other Provinces of the Dominion but P.E. Island have valuable undeveloped assets, in the shape of great tracts of land; giant forests or valuable minerals. Yet all these Provinces under the new arrangement of subsidies receive increases in both per capita allowance and in allowance for Legislature and Government. But poor Prince Edward Island, while getting her allotment in the scale of increases for civil government losses on every other head because her delegates failed to plead her cause and neglected to take advantage of the opportunity offered for securing better terms. Much more remains to be said on this question, but for the present our space is exhausted.

Two Public Meetings.

During last week two great public meetings were held for the discussion of the subsidy matters and other questions involved in the terms of Confederation. The first of these meetings was held at Vernon River Bridge on Wednesday evening and the second was held at Morell on Friday evening. Both meetings were very largely attended and at both resolutions bearing on the subsidies and other matters, were passed with scarcely a dissenting voice. As the resolutions passed at the Vernon River meeting are practically identical with those on the same subjects passed at the Morell meeting we will not repeat them; but publish those passed at Morell. At the Vernon River meeting Mr. Owen Sullivan occupied the chair, and the speakers were, Messrs. S. A. Nicholson, A. L. Fraser, J. A. Mathieson, Leader of the Opposition, F. L. Hazard, W. E. Benoit, D. P. Irving, and John Anderson, in the order named. Messrs. Hazard and Irving are the representatives of the district in the Legislature and their presence and speeches in no way persuaded the electorate assembled that the contentions of the Leader of the Opposition was not correct, and the resolutions proposed at the end of the meeting were unanimously adopted.

The meeting held in Morell Hall on Friday evening was not only very large and representative; but most orderly and exemplary in every respect. Mr. James H. Dingwell was voted to the chair and the speakers, in the order named, were: Messrs. James McIsaac, James D. McInnis, M. L. A., W. A. O. Morson, M. L. A., R. N. Cox, J. A. Mathieson,

Leader of the Opposition, W. E. Bentley and H. D. McEwen. The Leader of the Opposition and those who spoke with him on that side, carefully avoided giving the discussion a partisan turn; all spoke from the point of view of Prince Edward Islanders, advocating justice and fair play for our Province. The Leader of the Opposition declared, as he had done at previous meetings, that he would be recreant to his duty to the Province if he should fail to assist the Government in any proper effort to obtain the better terms to which the Province is entitled, and which are absolutely required for the adequate performance of the public services.

It was plainly pointed out to the meeting from the records and history of the agitation for readjustment of the Provincial subsidies, that our delegates to the Ottawa Conference in October last, viz., Premier Peters and Hon. George E. Hughes, had failed to safeguard the Island's interests in a matter of such paramount and vital importance. The failure of our delegates to make a demand for our legitimate claim on account of increased expenditure for education, public works, etc., cannot be condoned and their assent to removing the saving clause from our Province in the matter of per capita allowance is inexplicable. So far as the increase to the Province in the amount for Legislature and Government is concerned, no fault is to be found. But it must always be remembered that Messrs. Peters and Hughes had nothing to do with getting that amount. It was agreed upon at the Quebec Conference in 1887, and has not been changed since. Towards the close of the meeting when the second resolution was presented to the meeting, Messrs. McInnis and Cox occupied some time in offering objections and in endeavoring to delay advising the representatives to stand out for better terms. These efforts were in vain as the resolutions passed with scarcely any opposition. The absence of Premier Peters from this meeting in his own district was generally commented upon. Following are the resolutions passed:

Moved by H. D. McEwen seconded by R. N. Cox.

Resolved that it is the opinion of this meeting that a meeting should be held at Charlottetown at an early date, composed of delegates from all parts of the Province to decide upon some uniform and definite plan of action to press for and secure continuous daily steam communication with the railway system of the Mainland.

Carried unanimously.

Moved by Alexander Stewart, seconded by Thomas Kenny.

"Resolved that this meeting of electors of the Second district of Kings County, held at Morell, instruct their representatives in the Legislature not to give their consent to any reduction of the per capita subsidy now allowed by law to this Province."

Mr. R. N. Cox, seconded by Mr. Webster, moved in amendment:

"Resolved that this meeting does not consider itself competent to express an opinion on the matter of increased subsidies until after the delegates have reported to the House."

After a short discussion the amendment was all but unanimously rejected and the resolution was adopted by a standing vote of all but three or four of those present who rose on the command of Mr. Cox to "stand up."

Moved by Alexander Stewart, seconded by Thomas Kenny;

"Resolved that the government of this Province do present to the government of Canada the claim of this Province for additional subsidy to meet the increased expenditure of this Province for education, maintenance of asylums agriculture and public works."

And further resolved that a special claim be presented for additional consideration and recognition on account of the special conditions existing in this Province and the nonfulfilment of the terms of Union."

This resolution was unanimously carried, the sole exception being Mr. R. N. Cox who voted "No."

Moved by Peter Byrne, seconded by Donald McDonald.

"Resolved that this meeting do heartily approve and endorse the action taken by the Legislature as expressed by resolution and by the unanimous vote of the House in the session of 1905, as concerning many of the disabilities we are laboring under, owing to the non-fulfilment of the terms of Confederation, and we would respectfully urge our Local government and the Legislature to continue to press our claims as there

in set forth until justice is obtained."

Further resolved that we shall deem any measure of justice incomplete and unsatisfactory which does not provide for the restoration to this Province of its original number of representatives in the House of Commons.

This resolution was unanimously passed; Mr. Cox alone voting "No."

After a vote of thanks to the chairman the great meeting adjourned shortly after 11 o'clock.

On the 12th inst. an advertisement appeared in the daily papers of a public meeting at Montague on the 22nd, for the purpose of discussing the subsidy matter and other questions bearing on the terms of Confederation. Eleven names were attached to this notice and these were the names of both Liberal and Conservative electors. This seemed eminently proper, as these meetings are not of a partisan nature and the questions up for discussion are of too important a character to be approached from the point of view of mere party; they are questions of too much importance to our Province to be treated in any such spirit. In the light of these facts, it seemed most extraordinary to find on the following day a letter in the Patriot from four of the signers of the notice for the public meeting in question, stating that they desired to have their names withdrawn from the notice. The reason they gave for this withdrawal is that they signed, somewhat hurriedly, without understanding what they were doing. The names of the withdrawers are: A. S. McLeod, John J. McDonald, J. W. Carruthers and D. J. McLean. Surely the course pursued by these gentlemen is most extraordinary. Is it not a proper thing to have public questions discussed at a public meeting? One would suppose that every intelligent elector would be too pleased to have an opportunity of hearing these questions discussed from every point of view. Are we to conclude that these gentlemen allowed themselves to be persuaded to back down by local Liberal manipulators, who are terribly afraid of the truth? Surely these gentlemen ought to have more interest in the proper treatment of our Province by the Federal authorities than thus to show the white feather to please anybody. But the most extraordinary phase of the back-down is the attitude assumed by Mr. J. W. Carruthers. After requesting the withdrawal of his name on the ground that he did not understand the purport of the meeting, he wrote another letter on the following day saying he did understand what the meeting was for; but still desired to have his name withdrawn. Here we have a man saying almost in the same breath, that he did and that he did not know what he was doing. Poor fellow, the pressure brought to bear on him must have been so heavy that he was completely muddled.

THE LAND FOR THE SETTLER.

The declared policy of the Liberal Party before it took office was "to grant or sell lands to actual settlers only." The Party platform condemned "pasture land leases to cattle kings." Before that time grazing leases had been subject to cancellation whenever the land was required for settlement. For several years the present government followed the old policy which the party had condemned.

THE LAND FOR THE SPECULATOR.

Then it made some changes. One made it no longer necessary for the whole government to authorize a great lease. Mr. Sifton took power to do it all by himself. The second was that leases were no longer subject to cancellation when the land was needed for settlement. The holder could be allowed an irrevocable twenty one year lease and could shut out all settlement during that period. Thirdly, the lease was allowed an absolute freehold grant of one-tenth of his holding at a price of one dollar an acre and was allowed to roam through his kingdom selecting the

best lands in small sections. Lastly, notwithstanding these special privileges, there was no competition, but the leases and sales were made by private deal.

A GREAT DAY FOR THE GRATER.

The happy period when these leases were given did not last long. Most of the concessions were given between February and August, 1905. Seven favorites came in during that period and obtained nearly 400,000 acres. These were all allotted to particular friends of ministers, some of them members of parliament and some relatives of members. After they had what they wanted the law was changed. Future leases were made revocable. The price of land for the ranch headquarters was trebled. As a result the value of the concessions previously made was increased and the favorites greatly enriched.

A FORTUNATE COUPLE.

Two of the happy group of leasees were the above mentioned Hitchcock and McGregor. Hitchcock was an intimate friend of the Minister of the Interior and a political associate of several Western politicians. McGregor had been a lively stable keeper in Brandon and useful in Mr. Sifton's campaigns. That minister appointed him license commissioner inspector of mines and collector of royalty in the Yukon. He returned in a few years in a position to make large investments. It did not, however, require much money to take the leases at Medicine Hat. McGregor and Hitchcock both paid their first rental scrip, which probably cost them about 25 cents on the dollar. A few months after they had obtained their leases they merged the two, making a holding of 96,482 acres. Their next business was to one tenth of that area or 9600 and buy it outright for \$1, an acre. Having done this they looked about for a purchaser, and to begin with they had an expert valuator, Robert Hall of Brandon appraise their 9600 acres. Here is what he said of the land a few months after the Government had sold it for \$1, an acre.

INCREASED TWELVE FOLD.

"The real estate of the Company consists of 10,000 acres of selected land in the Province of Alberta. These lands have been selected out of an area of 100,000 acres held under lease by the Grand Forks Cattle Company, Limited, and are in my opinion easily of the value of \$12,000 per acre under present conditions without reference to any future or speculative possibilities."

THEY WANTED MORE.

Messrs. Hitchcock and McGregor, contending the Grand Forks Cattle Company, formed themselves into another concern called the Robins Irrigation Company, of which McGregor owned twenty-two per cent, Hitchcock 77 per cent, while one St. Aubyn held one per cent. Guy Tracy Robins, a young Englishman, without much to do, lent his name to the organization. This Robins Company in June, 1906 obtained from the government a new concession. It got a grant of 380,000 acres adjoining the Grand Forks lease. The price fixed was \$3 an acre but \$2 an acre was to be allowed as a credit for expenditure of the company in irrigating the land so that the net cost would be \$1 an acre. The company agreed to irrigate one quarter of the grant and to spend within ten years for this purpose \$760,000. No payment was required for several years.

\$468,600.

Having obtained this new kingdom from the government Mr. Hitchcock and McGregor transferred it to a brokerage firm for sale in England and in six months from the time the deal was made in Ottawa an English concern paid Hitchcock and McGregor \$100,000 sterling to transfer the bargain to them. This last purchasing company is called the Southern Alberta Land Company, which took over all the rights and duties belonging to the 380,000 acres grant giving Hitchcock and McGregor \$468,600 for their bargain.

\$350,000 ON DEAL NUMBER TWO.

The next business was for Hitchcock and McGregor, as the Grand Forks Cattle Company to sell out their twenty-one year lease and 10,000 acre grant to the Southern Alberta people together with what cattle they had gathered about them. This sale was made for £135,000 sterling or \$654,650. It was alleged on doubtful authority that the owners of the Grand Forks Company had expended nearly \$300,000 on their property which leaves over \$350,000 as their net profits out of the two grazing leases. We have therefore over \$835,000 which these two favorites made in a few months out of three government grants given to them on special terms, privately and without competition. How much of this has been divided among the parties whose influence was used in their behalf, who and how many official and political partners there may be in the deal is not yet known.

ANOTHER SERIES OF PROFITS.

The Southern Alberta Company which has thus obtained the irrigation grant and the grazing leases added \$815,000 to the cost of the property by allowing that sum for additional promoters' profits and preliminary expenses. So the Southern Alberta shareholders pay \$1,468,600, for what should have cost the price of the live stock and improv-

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COCOA

The Arctic scandal. Mr. McLean gave himself away badly by pleading that irrevocable twenty-one year leases were absolutely necessary to secure the rancher in his investment, and that the absolute grant of one-tenth of the grazing lease was equally essential to provide fodder for cattle. He forgot that both the freehold grant and the irrevocable lease were no longer given and were never allowed to any but the half dozen favorites whose leases were taken during the short period that the gate was open. All the genuine ranchers of the west have to do without these things which the government advocates declare to be essential.

TWENTY-TWO LIBERALS DODGE THE VOICE.

Of course it came to a party vote in the end, except that Mr. Borden voted with the Opposition, after explaining that he did so out of respect to ancient Liberal principles and the Liberal doctrine of "the land for the settler." But while the vote went on party lines it may be noted that the majority was only 33, which is far below normal. Twenty-two Liberals, who are too good party men to vote against the government were ashamed to support the deal either by voting or pairing in favor of it.

A REVOLTER HEARD FROM.

Armande Lavergne, Liberal member for Montserrat, made a speech on Tuesday which is worthy of note. This young member has voted four times in

Snappy Styles

—OF—

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